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A
REPRESENTATION
CONCERNING THE
Knowledge of Commerce
AS A
NATIONAL CONCERN;
POINTING OUT THE
PROPER MEANS
OF
PROMOTING SUCH KNOWLEDGE
IN THIS
KINGDOM.

By *J. Maſſie.*

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO

HIS GRACE

The DUKE of NEWCASTLE,

Firſt Lord Commiſſioner of His Majeſty's Treaſury, &c.

AND TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of LINCOLN,

Auditor of His Majeſty's Exchequer, &c.

MY LORDS,

THE Repreſentation that I have here preſumed to addreſs to your Grace and to your Lordſhip, is humbly intended to point out the proper Means of promoting the Knowledge of Commerce *as a national Concern*; for though a great Number of Books have already been profeſſedly written for that Purpoſe, the Branch of Knowledge they were intended to promote, ſtill continues at a very low Ebb in this Kingdom.

And after conſidering the Nature and Extent of the Subject, as well as the irregular and broken Manner in which it hath been treated of by commercial Writers, I do not ſee how any better Conſequence could be expected; for no general Partition of commercial Knowledge hath been yet eſtabliſhed, nor can the Means of acquiring it be come at, without collecting and reading more than a Thouſand Books and Pamphlets.

Some Writers have conſidered Commerce as a *Science*, and endeavoured to deduce the Knowledge of it from Axioms, Maxims, *&c.* while many others have treated it as a Branch of *Hiſtory*, and given Narratives of Tranſactions, Occurrences, *&c.* but the former have made only light Eſſays on the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge, and the latter have given only Scraps of a commercial Hiſtory, or at moſt, have compiled only ſmall Parts of it.

So that a Man cannot by their Writings diſcover, whether the Knowledge he is inquiring after be ſcientific, or hiſtorical, or both, nor is he thereby enabled to ſtudy and underſtand the Subject in either Point of View; and as to the Generality of commercial Writers, they have not conſidered Commerce either as a *Science*, or as a Branch of *Hiſtory*, but have mixed *perſonal* with *national* Affairs, and blended *Principles*, *Hiſtory*, and *Practice* together.

Under theſe Circumſtances, it is impoſſible to generally promote the Knowledge of Commerce as a national Concern; for ſuch Knowledge cannot be acquired until the neceſſary Means are not only aſcertained, but properly collected together; and they ſhould have been aſcertained at the firſt, becauſe a general Partition of commercial Knowledge would have followed of Courſe, and the many Difficulties now attending the Subject, might have been thereby avoided.

For as in founding of Cities, the Streets and Fortifications thereof are firſt marked out; ſo in eſtabliſhing of Sciences, or any widely extended Branches of Knowledge, the Diviſions and Boundaries of each ſhould be firſt ſettled; and the Conſequences of not beginning with thoſe fundamental Regulations are much alike in both Caſes, for the Error cannot be rectified in either, without pulling down what hath been built, and rebuilding upon a right Plan.

Nor will an Increaſe in the Number of Books be otherwiſe ſerviceable in ſuch Caſes, than by furniſhing out more Materials to rebuild with, and that only in Proportion to the Quantity of new and uſeful Matter therein contained; for repeating the ſame Things a Hundred Times over, as hath been done in commercial Books, ſerves only to *increaſe Labour* and *retard Knowledge*; and that is one Reaſon why commercial Knowledge hath not increaſed as thoſe Books have been multiplied.

So much do the acquiring and promoting of Knowledge depend upon the Out-lines of Sciences being truly drawn, that no great Miſtake or Omiſſion therein can be remedied by all the Ingenuity or Labour which it is poſſible to beſtow on their interior Parts; for painting Ten Times over a diſtorted and ill-marked Picture, will not rectify the falſe Ideas it at firſt gave of the Perſon repreſented, nor will reprinting of irregular and defective Treatiſes any more promote commercial Knowledge.

For Books are Paintings of Sciences, as Pictures are of Perſons; and the Picture of a Science muſt not only be well drawn, but the Whole thereof be exhibited together, before the Perſons who ſtudy it can have a clear Idea and complete Knowledge of ſuch Science; or if it conſiſts of ſo many extenſive Branches, that the Whole cannot be generally and particularly conſidered at one View, a Miniature or general Abſtract thereof ſhould be firſt preſented, and the ſeveral Branches be particularly treated of afterwards.

In Books of Geography, a general Map of the World, and a Deſcription of its greater conſtituent Parts, are the firſt Things which Readers are made acquainted with; and when they have acquired a general Idea and Knowledge of the Whole, their Minds are properly prepared for taking a diſtinct View of each Part, upon a larger Scale; becauſe they are then ſatisfied as to the Extent of the Subject, and find the Parts thereof ſo divided, that they can cultivate ſome and neglect others, without confuſing their general Knowledge of the Whole.

By this Method of Procedure, Perſons of moderate Capacity are enabled to acquire a Knowledge of the relative Magnitude, Situation, Figure, &c. of the exterior Parts of the terraqueous Globe; and Lord *Bacon* hath eſtabliſhed a Sort of intellectual Geography, in order to promote all Branches of liberal Knowledge; for his *Partition of Sciences*, may properly enough be called a general Map of the intellectual World, wherein the greater Branches of Knowledge anſwer to Continents, Empires, Oceans, Seas, &c. in a general Map of the material World.

Nor is it a Map made up of the Out-lines and Names of Sciences only; for there is ſo much uſeful Information annexed to each of them, that a Reader finds out their ſeveral Natures and different Degrees of Culture, with much the ſame Facility as he finds out the Nature and Culture of Land in different Countries, by reading geographical, *&c.* Deſcriptions of them; and thus by a natural Aſſemblage and Partition of Sciences hath the Knowledge of them been more promoted, than by half the Books which had been written on them.

For by thoſe Means, ingenious Men have not only been ſhewn the Connection of the whole intellectual Syſtem, and directed to the particular Sciences which ſuited with their ſeveral Inclinations; but they have alſo been guided to ſuch Parts thereof as remained to be cultivated, and, at the ſame Time, reſtrained to a natural Method of Culture; without which, Men may labour all their Lives in unimproved Sciences, and not acquire Knowledge enough to compenſate for the Difficulties and Uncertainties they remain under.

Which Matters are ſtrongly exemplified, by the preſent confuſed Method of cultivating the Knowledge of Commerce as a national Concern, and by the many Difficulties and Uncertainties which have hitherto attended that Branch of Knowledge; for the Subject neither is ſo complicated nor ſo extenſive as not to be comprehenſible by Men of plain good Underſtanding; but it muſt appear *that commercial Writers fully underſtand the Subject*, before *commercial Readers can fully comprehend it*.

And the contrary thereof, in relation to commercial Writers, is ſo ſtrongly indicated by the irregular and broken Manner in which they have treated of Commerce,

merce, that it matters not, in regard to what I am now ſpeaking of, which of them did, or did not, fully underſtand the Subject; becauſe the Determination in this Caſe is not to be made by what any one or more of thoſe Writers knew of Commerce, but by what their Writings have contributed to inform other People of it, and that hath been found by commercial Readers to be but little in Proportion to the Whole.

The Cauſes whereof are, their not having either the *Elements of commercial Knowledge* to inform them of the Rules of Right and Wrong therein, or a proper *commercial Hiſtory* to inform them of the paſt and preſent States, *&c.* of the ſeveral Branches of *Britiſh* Manufactury and Commerce; by which Means, they have been kept under the ſame Sort of Uncertainty as Mariners would be, in long Voyages, without either *Compaſs* or *Quadrant*; for they neither could know what Courſe to ſteer, nor how to avoid being retarded and toſſed about by the Winds of contrary Opinion.

Certainly it is not eaſy for a Man to figure to himſelf a literary Purſuit more diſagreeable than is the Study of Commerce as a national Concern, under all the various Difficulties and Uncertainties which have hitherto been found therein; but ſince it plainly enough appears, that the Whole of them ariſe from an irregular, confuſed, and broken Manner of treating the Subject, and not from the Nature of the Subject itſelf, the Practicability of removing them cannot reaſonably be doubted of, though it will be a Work of great Labour.

And the Knowledge of Commerce *as a national Concern*, is ſo very intereſting to all Ranks and Degrees of People in *Great Britain*, that it is quite unneceſſary to ſpecify in this Place, the ſeveral Reaſons why all proper Endeavours ſhould be uſed to facilitate the Acquiſition of ſuch Knowledge; for the Rich *know* and the Poor *feel* that their Welfare depends upon the Proſperity of Commerce, which is the ſtrongeſt general Reaſon imaginable for promoting the Knowledge of it as a national Concern.

But this deſirable End cannot be attained without the Sanction of public Authority and the Aid of public Support; for a conſiderable Part of the neceſſary Materials are not obtainable without the former, nor can the Expences of the whole Undertaking be borne without the latter; of both which Things it is expedient to make mention in this Addreſs, that your Grace and your Lordſhip may be duly apprized of the national Reaſons which there are to ſupplicate ſuch high Protection.

And thoſe Reaſons receive additional Weight from Two moſt deſirable Circumſtances in Favour of the Subject here treated of: — Firſt, from the ſtrong Connection it hath with the *public Revenues* of this Kingdom, which are principally and generally under the Direction and Superintendence of your Grace and your Lordſhip: — Secondly, from it being *a Branch of liberal Knowledge*, which naturally comes under your Grace's Protection, as authoritative and real Patron of One of the greateſt Seminaries of Learning in the World.

It is not for a Man in my humble Station to expatiate upon your Grace's having devoted your whole Life and Fortune to the Service of your moſt gracious Sovereign, and of the Public; but I cannot help obſerving, that when there were eccentric Movements in the political Syſtem of *Great Britain*, the wonted Regularity was not reſtored, until your Grace returned to the Centre and gave Stability to the Whole.

Permit me to remain, with very great Deference and Reſpect,

MY LORDS,

Your GRACE*'s and Your* LORDSHIP*'s*

Moſt obedient and moſt humble Servant,

Weſtminſter,
31ſt May 1760.

J. Maſſie.

A
REPRESENTATION
CONCERNING
Commercial Knowledge.

I THINK it expedient to repreſent, that I have been above Twelve Years collecting Materials for an hiſtorical Account of the ſeveral Branches of Manufactury and Trade belonging to this Kingdom; and alſo for another Treatiſe, wherein I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh upon fixed Principles, that Branch of commercial Knowledge which may properly be called elementary, becauſe it is deducible from ſelf-evident Truths, and not at all connected with either the hiſtorical or the practical Branches.

Commercial Writers have indeed generally blended thoſe Three Branches of Knowledge together, in a very confuſed piece-meal Manner; and that is the chief Reaſon why Trade cannot be well underſtood *as a national Concern*, without having Recourſe to a great Number of Books, and ſubmitting to read Fifty Times more than is to the Purpoſe; for the valuable Part of what hath been written concerning the *Commerce*, *Coin*, and *Colonies* of *Great Britain*, is not now to be come at without collecting Fifteen Hundred, or more, Books and Pamphlets on thoſe Subjects.

That Number I have collected, at a conſiderable Expence, and yet I do not know where to look for a ſatisfactory Account of any one Branch of *Britiſh* Manufactury or Trade; nor have I met with any but very imperfect Eſſays on the Elements of Commerce; for Nine in Ten of thoſe Books and Pamphlets being written upon particular Occaſions, they give a Reader no better Ideas of the Nature and State of

Commerce, than he would have of the Rivers and Counties in *England* by ſeeing a Map of it upon a Thouſand or Fifteen Hundred ſeparate Sheets of Paper.

In other Branches of ſcientific Knowledge, the great Care hath been, to eſtabliſh them upon ſelf-evident Principles, and to arrange the ſeveral Parts of each Branch in ſuch Order as beſt ſhews their Connection, and leads the Mind from Truth to Truth; but this Method of Procedure hath been very much neglected in the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge, for I know of only Three or Four *Engliſh* Writers who have profeſſedly treated on that Branch; and Mr. *Locke* hath furniſhed more as well as better Materials for it than all of them, at leaſt in my Opinion.

As to an hiſtorical Account of the various Branches of *Britiſh* Manufactury and Trade, any Perſon may eaſily diſcover the Want of it, by conſidering how confuſed and imperfect our Knowledge of the civil, military, or naval Tranſactions of this Nation would be, if it was to be picked out of Fifteen Hundred Books and Pamphlets, which could not be collected in leſs than Ten or Twelve Years, and in which there was not only Fifty Times as much ſaid, as it was neceſſary for the Reader to know, but a great Number of Things unfairly repreſented.

Under ſuch Diſcouragements as theſe, not One Perſon in a Hundred of thoſe who now read Hiſtory would concern themſelves with it; becauſe the Knowledge thereby acquired would not make amends for the Time, Money, and Vexation it coſt; but thoſe Diſcouragements to the ſtudying of civil, military, naval, *&c.* Hiſtory, have been from Time to Time removed by a Succeſſion of learned or ingenious Men, who have taken Care to ſelect from Annals, Memoirs, State-Papers, *&c.* whatever is worth knowing, and to digeſt the whole in proper Order.

By theſe Means, thoſe Branches of Hiſtory have been freed from the Heaps of Rubbiſh with which they would otherwiſe have been incumbered, and the Study of them hath been made pleaſant as it is profitable; for any Perſon may read what Intereſt or Inclination lead him to know, without being interrupted by the Interpoſition of great Numbers of Things which are foreign to the Purpoſe, and he can readily find what he ſearches for, without being at much Expence.

How it comes to paſs, that commercial Knowledge hath been ſo much neglected by the ingenious Men of this Nation, I cannot certainly tell, but I think it may be in ſome Meaſure accounted for, by Two very prevailing Opinions in regard to Commerce; for it is generally thought that the Nature of Trade *as a national Concern*, cannot be underſtood without firſt practiſing ſome Branch of Trade *as a Profeſſion*; and this undoubtedly hath induced Men of Learning to think that ſuch Knowledge is illiberal.

But I muſt beg Leave to ſay, that neither of theſe two Opinions are juſt; for it is not neceſſary to learn Trade as a Profeſſion in order to underſtand it nationally, nor is the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern leſs liberal than other Branches of Policy; and ſince a general Belief of the contrary ſeems to have hitherto prevented commercial Knowledge from being promoted and eſtabliſhed in a Manner ſuitable to the Importance it is of to the *Britiſh* Nation, there is a Neceſſity for ſhewing that thoſe Opinions are ill founded.

If it be requiſite to learn Trade *as a Profeſſion* in order to underſtand it *as a national Concern*, thoſe Merchants or other trading People who have written upon the different Branches of our Commerce, ſhould agree in their Sentiments about the proper Means of regulating Trade to the beſt Advantage; but the Merchants and other trading People of this Kingdom have been ſo far from thinking alike in ſuch Matters, that moſt of the commercial Regulations which have from Time to Time been made by the Legiſlature, were prayed for by ſome Merchants or Traders, and petitioned againſt by others.

Almoſt every Seſſion of Parliament produceth Inſtances of ſuch Oppoſition between Merchants or other Perſons concerned in Trade; and ſince the one or the other of ſuch contending Parties certainly muſt be in the wrong, it may with Reaſon be ſaid that the erring Party do not underſtand Trade *as a national Concern*; but this Matter is more plainly made appear by that Superiority which one or a few Perſons in each Branch of Trade are allowed, by other Perſons of the ſame Profeſſion, to have in judging of what is proper to be repreſented or done, when a Branch of Trade is under national Conſideration; for that Superiority conſiſts in *Judgment* and not of *Practice*, though longer Practice happens ſometimes to accompany it.

So that nothing more can in general and with Certainty be deduced from ſuch Oppoſition between trading People, than that Numbers of them do not underſtand Trade as a national Concern, though they know very well how to gain Wealth by their Skill in thoſe particular Branches which they follow; and, on the other Hand, it is certain, that many Perſons who did not at all underſtand Trade as a Profeſſion, were very well acquainted with the Nature of it as a national Concern; of which Number were Sir *William Temple*, Sir *William Petty*, Mr. *Locke*, Dr. *Davenant*, *&c.*

Here then is a double Proof, that the Knowledge of Trade *as a Profeſſion* and *as a national Concern*, are Two diſtinct and independent Branches of Knowledge; for great Numbers of Perſons acquire the former without the latter, and other Perſons have acquired the latter without the former: ſo that though there undoubtedly are many *Britiſh* Merchants who very well underſtand the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, yet they did not acquire that Knowledge by their Experience in Trade as a Profeſſion, but by a liberal Exerciſe of ſound and extenſive Judgment.

For trading People neither have nor can be expected to have any other commercial Point in View, than that of gaining as much Money in their ſeveral Profeſſions as they juſtly can, by carrying on Trade according to the Laws of their Country; and thoſe Merchants who chiefly employ their Thoughts and Judgment in finding out Ways to gain Wealth for themſelves, are thereby rendered leſs capable of underſtanding Trade as a national Concern; becauſe they generally acquire contracted Notions of it, and reaſon upon the Principles whereby they themſelves have thriven.

This is the chief Cauſe of that Diverſity of Opinions which there conſtantly hath been among Merchants and other trading People, in regard to the Regulation of Commerce; for contracted Notions of Trade, like Prejudices of Education, ſtick by the Generality of Men as long as they live; and it requires more than common Strength of Judgment to follow the Example of Sir *Joſiah Child*, in this reſpect, who hath ſhewn much of the Miniſter but very little of the Merchant, in his commercial Writings, though he was a Merchant by Profeſſion, and continued in Trade the greateſt Part of his Life.

The various Branches of our Manufactury and Trade, when nationally conſidered, may aptly enough be compared to one vaſt Piece of Machinery, wherein there are various Setts of Movements which have ſome Dependence on each other, and yet are moved by ſeemingly independent Claſſes of People; for thoſe of one Claſs are apt to think that they can go on well without the others, and that their Knowledge of the Sett of Wheels which they move or ſuperintend, diſcovers to them the Connection and Dependence which each Part of this vaſt moving Syſtem hath upon the others, and ſuggeſts proper Means for preventing or remedying Diſorders therein.

But moſt of thoſe Claſſes of People have at different Times found to their Coſt, that when one of them ſuffers the others are ſure to feel it, though they may not eaſily diſcover the real Cauſe of ſuch ſuffering; for great Men have ſometimes miſtaken the Root of a Diſeaſe that a whole Nation laboured under; and as to any of thoſe Claſſes of People diſcovering the Connection and Dependence which each Part hath upon the others, particular Men among them *who ſtudy the whole Syſtem* may underſtand it, but thoſe who chiefly confine themſelves to *their own particular Parts* cannot have a Knowledge of the *Whole*.

Watch-making is divided into Twenty, or more, different Branches of Manufactury, and each Branch is well known to the Perſons who practiſe it, but none of them have the like Knowledge of every Branch, nor is it probable that One in a Hundred of them underſtands the Connection and Dependence of all the Parts in a Watch; for that is a Sort of Knowledge far above the Art of making Wheels or Springs, as the Knowledge of Architecture is ſuperior to the Art of making Doors or Windows; and ſuch is the Difference between *ſcientific Compoſition*

poſition and *mechanic Execution*, that a Hundred Men ſucceed well in the latter for One who arrives at Perfection in the former; becauſe the latter is *mere Imitation*, wherein Boys ſometimes are more expert than Men, but the former is founded upon *Principles* which require great Judgment to underſtand.

And agreeable to this we find, that a whole Age ſcarcely produces ſuch an Architect as Sir *Chriſtopher Wren*, ſuch a Portrait-Painter as *Vandyke*, ſuch a Compoſer of Muſic as Mr. *Handel*, or ſuch a Watch-maker as Mr. *Graham*; though there are at all Times many ingenious Artiſts in moſt Branches of Science, Art, Manufactury, &c. and from hence I ſhall take Occaſion to ſay, that neither a practical Knowledge of Trade, nor reading about the Coins, Weights and Meaſures of different Countries, or about the Laws and Cuſtoms of Merchants, in regard to Bills of Exchange, ſhipping of Goods, *&c.* are of any real Uſe to a Man who would underſtand the Nature of Trade as a national Concern; but on the contrary, are very prejudicial in that reſpect; becauſe they do not only take up much Time to no Purpoſe, but, *what is far worſe*, they give a wrong Bias to Judgment.

Acquiring a Knowledge of thoſe Things in order to underſtand Trade nationally, is much the ſame as learning to build *Houſes* or *Ships* in order to underſtand *Geometry*; or as learning to make *Teleſcopes* and *Priſms* in order to underſtand *Optics* and *the Doctrine of Light and Colours*: but ſuch Men as want to acquire thoſe Branches of ſcientific Knowledge, do not firſt learn to build *Houſes* or *Ships*, nor to make *Teleſcopes* or *Priſms*; becauſe it is very well known, that the Elements of thoſe Sciences conſtitute Branches of Knowledge diſtinct from, and independent of, the mechanic Arts whereunto they are applied.

And the Elements of Commerce, as a national Concern, are quite as diſtinct from, and independent of, the various Branches into which Trade is divided as a Profeſſion; although the mean Opinion that was formerly entertained of Trade and trading People, hath prevented ingenious Men from employing their Time in making this appear: For if a practical Knowledge of Trade *as a Profeſſion* had been neceſſary to underſtand it *as a national Concern*, no Man could have acquired the latter without the former, nor would Merchants, *&c.* have differed very frequently in their Opinions concerning Trade; but there are many Proofs to the contrary of each, and therefore it is needleſs to offer any thing farther on this Head.

The next Thing to be conſidered, is, *Whether the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern be illiberal?*——And this will not require much Conſideration; ſince it is eaſy to diſcover by what I have already mentioned, that ſuch Knowledge is intirely ſpeculative, and conſiſts of Judgment; for Men who ſpeak or write about the *Britiſh* Woollen Manufactury as a national Concern, do not ſay how any Sort of Woollen Cloth or Stuff is made, but confine themſelves to the national Advantages ariſing from that Manufactury; or to the Effects which, in their Opinions, any Matter or Thing hath had, or will have upon it.

Becauſe, none but *Woollen Manufacturers* are intereſted in knowing by what Methods Woollen Cloth or Stuff is wrought, but *the whole Nation* is intereſted in thoſe Advantages which ariſe from the Woollen Manufactury, and conſequently, in every Thing that hath injured, or is likely to injure it: So that the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern, wholly conſiſts in being able to trace out the Advantages or Diſadvantages which each Branch of Manufactury or Trade brings to a Nation; and alſo, the good or bad Effects which any Law or other Matter hath had, or is likely to have, upon each Branch of Manufactury or Trade.

This being the Caſe, no Perſon who conſiders Things farther than their Names, can well ſay *that ſuch Knowledge is illiberal*; ſince it evidently conſiſts of Ability to trace out Conſequences, and to make Deductions from Facts, or from ſelf-evident Principles, which Operations muſt be performed by Judgment, or not at all; and as every Sort of Knowledge acquired by Judgment is equally liberal in Nature, though not alike uſeful, nor attainable with equal Facility; I am perſuaded that no judicious Man will make any Difficulty of admitting that the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern is *perfectly liberal*.

And that Sort of commercial Knowledge is not only liberal in Nature, but at the ſame Time ſo dignified by the great Good ariſing therefrom, that it is juſtly intitled to Pre-eminence over many Branches of liberal Knowledge, and yields Precedency to very few; which Truths, the People of *Great Britain* have all imaginable Reaſon to acknowledge; for, under Providence, they owe to Commerce, the Enjoyment of their *Religion*, *Liberty* and *Property*; and yet, moſt ſtrange it is, that very Sort of Knowledge to which they owe theſe greateſt of Obligations, is *generally neglected and thought mean*.

Of late Years, ſeveral Men of Letters have indeed applied themſelves to the Study of Commerce as a national Concern, for they have the Example of Sir *William Temple*, Mr. *Locke*, &c. to keep them in Countenance, which is a Matter to be conſidered in all new Undertakings: And thoſe vaſt Loſſes which the Landholders of *England* ſuffered by the bad commercial Meaſures which were purſued during the Reigns of King *Charles* the Second and his Succeſſor, have undoubtedly induced a Number of Landholders to turn their Thoughts to Commerce, which, as Mr. *Locke* hath juſtly obſerved, is more intereſting to them than to Merchants.

Other principal Landholders do likewiſe ſtudy Commerce nationally, from a Deſire of underſtanding the Nature of all public Affairs which come under their Conſideration as Legiſlators; ſo that partly by one Means, and partly by another, commercial Knowledge hath made ſome Progreſs: But the Avenues which lead to it, ſtill continue ſo overrun with Briars and Brambles, and ſo choaked with Rubbiſh, that it requires more Patience, Perſeverance, and Labour to force a Way through thoſe Obſtacles, than any Man can ſpare for ſuch Purpoſe, who doth not make the Study of Trade as a national Concern, the principal Buſineſs of his Life.

That is the chief Reaſon why this valuable Branch of Knowledge hath hitherto continued in ſo fluctuating and obſcure a State; for as to the Subject itſelf, I am fully perſuaded that one Time or other the liberal Part of commercial Knowledge will be eſtabliſhed upon fixed Principles, and be acquirable by regular Study; but ſo long as *Principles*, *Hiſtory*, and *Practice* continue blended together, and *Maxims of particular Uſe* are made *Foundations for general Reaſoning*, the liberal Part of commercial Knowledge muſt of Neceſſity continue myſterious or uncertain, as ſeveral other Branches of certain Knowledge now would be, if they had been as miſerably mutilated.

To collect the ſcattered Parts of this mangled Subject, and to arrange them in their natural Order, probably is too great a Work for one Man to perform; but when the Foundation of a very uſeful Undertaking is laid, and a Progreſs made therein, other Perſons are induced to finiſh it; for many Men take a Pleaſure in improving or adding to a Plan, who will not ſubmit to the Labour requiſite to form one; and when the Works here ſpoken of, are performed in a rough and imperfect Manner, great Numbers of ingenious Perſons will then be in a Capacity of finiſhing what is roughly done, or of ſupplying Defects therein.

But as Matters now ſtand, ſuch Perſons are prevented from contributing their Aſſiſtance to an Undertaking of this Sort, by there not being any Part of it performed; for they cannot tell wherein their Judgment, or any Materials in their Poſſeſſion might be ſerviceable, till the Want of them appears; and ſince this cannot be ſhewn till a Progreſs is made in the Work, ſome Perſon or other muſt lay down the Plan, and execute a conſiderable Part of it, before other Perſons will be in a Capacity of promoting the Deſign; which cannot fail of going on ſucceſsfully, when a Number of ingenious Men contribute to forward it.

And as to the Inducements which ſuch Men will have to employ their Time in a Branch of Knowledge that hitherto hath generally been thought dry and mean, I am perſuaded they will ſoon find Reaſon to entertain very different Sentiments of it, when they conſider Trade nationally; of which, they may be in ſome Meaſure ſatisfied beforehand, by conſidering that Sir *William Temple* and Mr. *Locke*, whoſe commercial Writings are highly eſteemed, were Men of great Ability in other Reſpects, and are univerſally allowed to have been ſuch; or if that ſhould not be ſufficient, a very little Attention to the national Effects of Commerce will remove all reaſonable Doubts concerning what I have here mentioned.

For it is extremely well known in this Country, that Commerce is capable of making a Nation either *rich and powerful*, or *poor and weak*, according as it is *well* or *ill* regulated; the Certainty whereof may well induce any ſenſible Man to believe, that the Nature of a Thing which is capable of producing ſuch vaſt and oppoſite Effects, by a Succeſſion of many intermediate Cauſes, muſt be well worth inquiring into; and ſince neither national Proſperity, nor national Ruin, when effected by Commerce, do come all on a ſudden, but commonly by ſlow Degrees, a thinking Man may eaſily perceive, that the Influence which different Branches of Manufactury and Trade have upon the *Health*, *Manners*, and *Property* of a Nation, muſt afford ample Entertainment for the Learned and Judicious.

Or if it be conſidered, that the Trade of this Kingdom hath of late Years been Three Times as great as it was in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, though Three Times as much Money is now annually paid in Taxes as was paid for Taxes at that Time, it muſt be allowed that there is ſomething very ſurprizing in thoſe Things; for according to common Opinion, Taxes are highly detrimental to Trade, and yet our Trade hath extended as Taxes have been unavoidably increaſed by a Succeſſion of expenſive Wars; ſo that the Influence which different Taxes have upon Trade, is worth the Attention of ingenious Men, and neceſſarily muſt be attended to by Miniſters of State.

Or if it be conſidered that the Good ariſing to a Nation from Trade, depends much upon a proper Regulation of their Trade with other Nations, and that the commercial Intereſts of different Countries do naturally claſh or agree, according to their relative Situations and Productions, there will appear Reaſon for ſaying that ſuch Matters deſerve Conſideration: and when ingenious Men have attended to the Matters here hinted at, I am perſuaded they will acknowledge that the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, is ſo far from being a dry and mean Study, that on the contrary, there are ſeveral extenſive Branches of liberal, pleaſing, and profitable Knowledge belonging to it.

Thoſe Branches of Knowledge do not indeed at preſent appear to be either extenſive or pleaſing; but a Tree is not the ſhorter for being half concealed with Rubbiſh, nor are the Leaves, Flowers or Fruit of it naturally leſs pleaſing for being covered with Duſt, becauſe ſuch Covering doth not alter but conceal their Natures: ſo that ingenious Men ſhould not form a Judgment of commercial Knowledge by the many tedious and perplexing Books which have been written upon the Subject; but rather direct their Attentions to the Nature of thoſe Things which compoſe the Matter of it, and then they will find the Scene to be extenſive, diverſified, and pleaſing.

Two Centuries ago, Philoſophy was a dry, perplexing, and unprofitable Study; becauſe the Profeſſors of it chiefly employed themſelves in forming Hypotheſes according to their ſeveral Fancies, and in coining hard Words to gain ſerious Attention to ſyſtematical Fiction; which vain Purſuits gave Riſe to numberleſs Doubts and Controverſies, without bringing any Increaſe of natural Knowledge: but from the Time that Lord *Bacon* laid the Foundation of another Sort of Philoſophy, ingenious Men have continually been acquiring Knowledge of the Nature and Properties of Bodies; for they do not now wholly employ themſelves in fancying how natural Operations are effected, but examine by Experiment in what Manner Nature acts.

By theſe Means, Judgment hath got ſome Foundation to build upon; for *Experiments*, or Facts, and *Reaſon* going Hand-in-Hand, they help each other in Philoſophy, as well as in other Branches of Knowledge and in the common Concerns of Life; ſince by knowing how ſome Things are, we can judge how ſimilar Things may be: and when proper Facts have been as cloſely purſued in Commerce as Experiments have been regarded in Philoſophy, I am perſuaded that ſuch Purſuit will be attended with much greater Succeſs; for in the former, both Cauſes and Effects are diſcoverable to the Mind; but in the latter, there are many Things quite above human Comprehenſion.

There muſt have been a Time when geometrical Knowledge was as unſettled as commercial Knowledge now is, and yet, the Principles of the former have been long eſtabliſhed upon a firm Foundation; ſo that I cannot ſee any Reaſon why the Principles of the latter may not be eſtabliſhed in the ſame Manner: for all commercial Meaſures are either good or bad to the Nation which takes them; and ſince, in moſt Inſtances, it is either very plain, or can be demonſtrated by a Chain of Reaſoning founded on Facts or on ſelf-evident Principles, whether a Meaſure of that Sort is or will be good or bad, commercial Knowledge certainly may be eſtabliſhed upon a firm Foundation.

The various Migrations of Commerce do indeed give ſome Reaſon for thinking that the Knowledge of it cannot be reduced to fixed Principles; but the Force of that Reaſon will diſappear, when it is conſidered that neither the productive Laws of Nature nor the Principles of Arts and Sciences are at all affected by the Removal or Decay of thoſe Things to which they give Being or Form; for the Laws of Vegetation are ſtill the ſame, though Millions of Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers die every Year; and the Principles of Government remain unaltered, though many mighty Kingdoms have been overthrown.

Temperance and Exerciſe ſtill are as conducive to Health and long Life as they were in the early Ages of the World, though great Numbers of People who lived temperately are long ſince dead; the Principles of Geometry are the ſame as they were when firſt diſcovered, though many ſtately Edifices which were built by geometrical Rules are now crumbled into Ruins; and the ſame commercial Laws which brought Wealth and Naval Power to *Egypt*, *Greece*, and *Carthage*, Two or Three Thouſand Years ago, would, under the like Circumſtances, bring Wealth and Naval Power to the preſent Inhabitants of thoſe Countries.

For Commerce doth not remove from one Country to another *by Chance*, but in conſequence of great Events or adequate Cauſes; ſuch as the Calamities of War, oppreſſive Government, *&c.* in the Countries where it was ſeated; or greater natural Advantages, greater Protection from Government, new Diſcoveries, *&c.* in the Countries to which it removes; and agreeable to this we find, that the *Chineſe* and *Eaſt-Indian* Nations, which are ſaid to have been ſome of the moſt ancient Traders, do ſtill carry on a vaſt Trade, though the preſent Inhabitants of *Egypt*, *Greece*, and the *African* Territory of *Carthage*, have but little Trade.

All which Matters being conſidered, there appears to me to be very great Reaſon for aſſerting, that the Migrations of Commerce neither prove nor indicate any thing againſt the Practicability of eſtabliſhing commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles; and the Continuance of a vaſt Trade in *China*, *Eaſt-India*, &c. from the early Ages of the World to this Time, may very well paſs for a Proof of there not being any inbred Principle of Migration in Commerce; more eſpecially as Hiſtory will warrant my ſaying that the Removals of Commerce from *Egypt* and *Carthage*, to *Greece* and *Rome*, &c. were owing to *Conqueſt*, *Oppreſſion* or *Barbariſm*.

So that there is a double Security againſt thoſe Difficulties which the various Migrations of Commerce ſeem to throw in the Way; for the longeſt Courſe of national Experience recorded in Hiſtory, declares againſt there being any inbred Principle of Migration in Commerce; and the Four analagous Caſes which I have mentioned here, do plainly ſhew that ſuch a Principle, if it exiſts in Commerce, cannot affect either the Stability of commercial Knowledge, or the Practicability of reducing it to fixed Principles; for the productive Laws of Nature and Rules of Art, neither are nor can be affected by the Mutation or Diſſolution of the Things thereby produced.

But there are other Sorts of Mutation which give ſomewhat more Reaſon for thinking that commercial Knowledge cannot be reduced to fixed Principles, becauſe they enforce Alterations in commercial Meaſures; for ſuch is the Conſtitution of Human Affairs, that they never continue long in the ſame Situation, but do as it were keep moving in the Round of *Peace*, *War*, *Proſperity*, and *Adverſity*; according as they are propelled by the Wills of Princes, the Adminiſtration of Government, the Diſpoſitions of Nations, *&c.* and from hence ariſeth a Neceſſity of ſometimes altering commercial Meaſures, which ſhould ever be accommodated to thoſe ſuperior Mutations.

For it was wiſely obſerved by Sir *William Temple*, that Trade cannot grow or thrive to any Degree without a Confidence both of public and private Safety; and it is equally true, that Trade cannot grow or thrive to any Degree without a Retaliation both of unfriendly and friendly commercial Meaſures; becauſe, the Ability of one Nation to carry on Trade with other Nations doth chiefly and in general depend, upon nearly as great Quantities of the Commodities and Manufactures of ſuch one Nation being conſumed by the People of other Nations, as that Nation conſumes of their Commodities and Manufactures.

All the Mines in *Peru*, *Mexico*, and *Braſil* do not annually yield *Gold* and *Silver* ſufficient to pay for the foreign Commodities and Manufactures which yearly are conſumed by the *Spaniards* and *Portugueze*; and as to the other *European* Nations, which have ſcarcely any other *Gold* or *Silver* than what was extracted from thoſe Mines, and gained by them in a long Courſe of Trade, it is manifeſt that they cannot for a Continuance maintain their foreign Trade upon any other Terms than thoſe of exchanging Commodities and Manufactures with each other; although they can bear to loſe by ſome Branches of Trade, ſo long as they gain proportionably by others.

This being the Caſe, it is evident that Princes and States are under a Neceſſity of permitting their Subjects to conſume the Commodities and Manufactures of other Countries wherein the Conſumption of their Commodities and Manufactures is in like Manner permitted; and that Princes are alſo under a Neceſſity of retaliating upon an unfriendly Nation, whatever Injuries their Subjects ſuffer in conſequence of Prohibitions or high Duties being laid upon the Commodities and Manufactures which thoſe Subjects ſend to ſuch unfriendly Nation; or at leaſt, to retaliate ſo far as the Circumſtances of Affairs will permit.

Theſe Matters being premiſed, it is now to be inquired, whether or not ſuch Changes of commercial Meaſures as are made neceſſary by the Eſtabliſhment of *commercial Friendſhip* between Princes who were before in a State of *commercial Enmity*, do, or can, in the ordinary Courſe of Things, make it impracticable to eſtabliſh commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles?——And upon this Occaſion, I muſt again obſerve, that neither the productive Laws of Nature, nor the Principles of Arts and Sciences are in the leaſt altered by applying them to other Matter, Perſons, or Things, nor do they in ſuch Caſes produce any other than their wonted Effects.

The productive Laws of Nature are not altered by the ſowing of Corn in other Land, for *Engliſh Wheat* ſown in *North America*, and *North American Wheat* ſown in *England*, will both produce *Wheat*, though perhaps ſomewhat different in Goodneſs, according to the Difference of Seaſons and the differing Qualities of the Soil where grown; the Principles of Government are alike, whether the People thereby governed live in *Europe* or *Aſia*; Temperance and Exerciſe are as conducive to Health and long Life in *New England* as in *Old England*; geometrical Rules retain the ſame Efficacy in ſupporting Houſes, ſo far as depends upon Form, whether they are built of *Stone* or of *Brick*; and by Parity of Reaſoning, the Principles of commercial Knowledge, *whatever they are*, muſt retain their Nature and Efficacy in all Changes of Application.

But after removing theſe Foundations for Doubt, many Perſons probably will imagine that there muſt be ſome latent and inſuperable Obſtacle to the Eſtabliſhment of commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles, or otherwiſe the Thing would have been done before this Time; and if it had not been well known that *Right* and *Wrong* are demonſtrable in many commercial Meaſures, though not without vaſt Difficulty in ſome Caſes as Matters now ſtand, there might have been Reaſon for ſuſpecting that there muſt be ſome ſuch latent Obſtacle; but ſince the fundamental Principles of Right and Wrong in commercial Matters are generally agreed upon, and have led to the Diſcovery of Right and Wrong in ſeveral intricate Caſes, there cannot be much Foundation for ſuch Suſpicion.

Neither the *Greeks* nor the *Romans* knew any thing of the Art of *Letter-printing*; and yet, now the Diſcovery is made, any Man who hath ſeen the Proceſs of ſuch Printing may well wonder, how an Art *ſo plain in Nature* and *ſo great in Uſe*, could eſcape being diſcovered by Two ſuch learned Nations.——Nor did Men know to what Cauſes the Colours *Red*, *Orange*, *Yellow*, *Green*, *Blue*, *Violet*, *Indigo*, and their Compounds were owing; till Sir *Iſaac Newton* demonſtrated by Experiments, *&c.* that Light conſiſts of Particles of Matter endowed with colorific Properties, and that the *Redneſs* of Roſes, the *Greenneſs* of Leaves, *&c.* are cauſed by their reflecting only the *red* and *green*-making Particles of Light, and retaining all the others.

But this is far from being the Caſe in regard to the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge; for the fundamental Maxims already ſettled, the Analogy of Things, and that natural Continuity of Parts which ever exiſts, *whether diſcovered or not*, and conducts the Mind from the Root to the ſeveral Branches of each Sort of ſcientific Knowledge; theſe, I ſay, do altogether give Evidence ſo copious as to the Matter of it, and yet ſo clearly and ſtrongly to the ſame Point; that I think no Man, after conſidering the whole, can, without doing Violence to his Judgment, doubt of it being practicable *to eſtabliſh upon fixed Principles the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge.*

It is however to be remembered, that Men in ſearch of ſcientific Knowledge are, in Point of Progreſs, but as the ſcarcely viſible Inſects which imperceptibly creep upon the Bodies, Branches and Leaves of Trees; for the human Mind cannot aſcend to the Summit of acquirable Knowledge, by any other Means than ſetting out from the Foundation, and traverſing over all the intermediate Parts; and when it is conſidered what vaſt Improvements have from Time to Time been made in ſeveral Arts and Sciences, ſince the firſt Diſcovery thereof, the Labours of each Improver will ſeem but as the Travels of an Inſect, whoſe Period of Exiſtence is meaſured by a Summer's Day.

This is indeed a mortifying Conſideration, and yet it may be of much Uſe in the preſent Caſe, by keeping the Mind in a proper Temperament between the Extremes of Deſpair and impatient Deſire; for it is neceſſary to be ſatisfied that the Undertaking is practicable, and at the ſame Time, to be ſo armed againſt Diſappointment, that no ſlight Foil may diſcourage a Man from returning to the Charge; for Sciences unknown are not to be conſidered as *Rivers*, whoſe Courſes and Branchings may eaſily be found out by *ſailing* or *rowing* up them; but as *Mines of Silver*, the Form and Extent whereof cannot be diſcovered otherwiſe than by *removing the Earth* or *digging out the Ore*.

No Wonder then, if there ſhould be many Mines of *Silver* and of *Knowledge* which Men are totally ignorant of, though every Age and each civilized Nation hath produced a Succeſſion of diligent Inquirers after both; or that a ſeeming Poverty in the Ore of ſome Mines of Science hath prevented Mankind from knowing much more of them, than that there are ſuch Mines; or that the working of other Mines which are of Value, ſhould have been diſcontinued for Want of Protection, or of Means to proceed therein; or that later Ages have diſcovered new Veins in thoſe Mines of Knowledge, which till then were thought to have been quite exhauſted and worked out, many Ages before.

Nor can it, after reading what is already mentioned here, be a Wonder, that neither the Form nor Extent of the Mine of liberal commercial Knowledge are at this Time known, though a very great Part of the Ore hath been dug out; for, to continue the Metaphor, the Pieces of extracted Ore have not been placed together again in the Order they were found, but ſo promiſcuouſly jumbled and intermixed with ſuch vaſt Quantities of Earth, that the natural Form and Extent of the ſeemingly explored Parts, cannot, without great Labour and Patience, be really diſcovered in ſuch a Chaos of Matter, although it ſhould happen to contain all the Ore that hath been extracted. ——

Having Poſſeſſion of moſt of the commercial Books and Pamphlets which can be met with, doth indeed ſeem to be a vaſt Step toward eſtabliſhing upon fixed Principles the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge; and yet it amounts to no more in that Reſpect, than purchaſing the Ruins of a vaſt Edifice amounts to in regard to acquiring a certain Knowledge of the Form, Attitude, and Size of ſome Statue that is not only broken into many Hundred Pieces, but thoſe Pieces ſcattered under the Ruins, and promiſcuouſly jumbled with the ſevered Parts of other mutilated Statues; . . . . . and how little that is, every Statuary and any Man of common Underſtanding may very eaſily comprehend.

For it is evident that no Man, who did not ſee ſuch Statue before it was broken, &c. poſſibly can have a perfect and complete Knowledge of the *Form*, *Attitude*, and *Size* of it; until thoſe Ruins are not only turned over and removed, but all the broken Parts of the Statue collected together, and the whole thereof placed in their natural Order:

nor

nor can the Want of any conſiderable Parts be fitly ſupplied by a Statuary, unleſs he is ſo well acquainted with the Principles of muſcular Motion in the Human Body, as to diſcover by the Action of the Muſcles, *&c.* in the remaining Parts of the Statue, what the Attitude, *&c.* of the wanting Parts muſt have been.

And even this doth not quite convey an Idea of all the Labour and Difficulties which now attend the acquiring a Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern; for a Man muſt firſt collect Fifteen Hundred, or more, commercial Books and Pamphlets, and then begin to turn over the Ruins, *&c.* as before mentioned; or if he reads ſuch Books and Pamphlets as he collects them, it probably will be Twelve Years before all the ſcattered Materials can be collected and placed in proper Order; for my commercial Collection was above Twelve Years in making, though I reſided in *London*, and was not ſparing of either Time or Money to enlarge it.

And I thought the Undertaking was in great Forwardneſs when I had collected ſo many Materials, and placed them in ſuch Order that, by the Help of a Catalogue, any one Book or Pamphlet might be immediately found, and all which were written upon any Branch of Manufactury or Trade be ſoon ſelected; but when I came to examine what Materials I had relating to the *Leather-Trade*, the *Silk-Trade*, and the *Sugar-Trade*, upon which Three Branches I have already written, there appeared ſuch a Want of uſeful Matter, that I found it difficult to treat of thoſe Three Branches of Trade, with any tolerable Degree of Satisfaction.

And yet, there is no other Way to acquire a ſatisfactory Knowledge of the State, *&c.* of the Manufacturies and Trade of this Kingdom, than by treating of each Branch ſeparately, and ſo that their Increaſe, Decreaſe, Influence, *&c.* may appear; for *every Part* muſt be diſtinctly known, or *the Whole* cannot be well underſtood: but it is not to be expected that One Gentleman in a Hundred will employ ſeveral Months Time in rummaging over *Books*, *Pamphlets*, and *Parliamentary Caſes*, in order to find out the State of any Branch of Trade; nor is it by any Means right, that ſuch valuable Knowledge ſhould be ſo difficult to come at.

I think it expedient to mention theſe Things, becauſe they fully explain how it comes to paſs, that the Knowledge of Trade *as a national Concern* hath hitherto been kept at a very low Ebb, and not been well underſtood by Men who had Abilities to learn all that is acquirable; but ſuch Men cannot with Juſtice to themſelves, their Families, or their Country, ſacrifice half their Time in going through all the Drudgery mentioned here; and until *the End can be obtained* without *ſubmitting to ſuch diſagreeable Means*, the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern will continue very imperfect and be confined to a few Perſons.

If Gentlemen could learn the *Elements of Commerce*, as ſoon as they can learn the *Elements of Geometry*, or can go through a Courſe of experimental Philoſophy, I am perſuaded that the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge would ſoon be conſidered as a Branch of liberal Education; becauſe, the chief Reaſon why many *Britiſh* Gentlemen ſtudy the Laws and Conſtitution of this Kingdom, is, that they may the better know how to preſerve *Liberty* and *Property*; and ſince Commerce may be ſo managed as to either *ſecure* or *deſtroy* both, ſuch Gentlemen would not fail of giving due Attention to a Matter of ſo much Importance to them, when they were enabled to underſtand it in a reaſonable Time.

Or if, when any Branch of Manufactury or Trade is to come under national Conſideration, thoſe Gentlemen to whom the Cognizance of ſuch Matters belongs, could turn to an hiſtorical Account of that Branch of Manufactury or Trade, and in a few Hours inform themſelves of the principal Facts and national Matters relative to the ſame; there would not be ſo much room for Controverſy, nor ſuch frequent Neceſſity for conſulting other Perſons; becauſe many more Gentlemen would then know *what was to the Purpoſe* and *what not*, which is of very great Importance upon ſuch Occaſions.

For notwithſtanding the vaſt Numbers of Books and Pamphlets which have been written concerning the *Commerce*, *Coin*, and *Colonies* of this Kingdom, I much doubt, whether the national and valuable Part of the commercial Matter in them, will more than fill One Folio Volume of the larger Sort: but ſince many other Materials ſhould be collected for a commercial Hiſtory, beſides what have been printed; it is probable that ſuch a Work, together with the Elements of Commerce illuſtrated by Applications, may make Two Volumes in Folio, and I am perſuaded that they cannot neceſſarily be extended farther.

A learned Gentleman hath indeed filled Two Quarto Volumes with an hiſtorical, *&c.* Account of our *Woollen Manufactury*; and conſidering that it is the grand Concern of this Kingdom, the Subject ought to be amply treated of; but a commercial Hiſtory upon ſo large a Plan will not much promote the Knowledge of Trade *as a national Concern*, though ſome Perſons would like it better; for if other Branches of Manufactury and Trade were to be ſo copiouſly treated of, a commercial Hiſtory of *Great Britain* and the *Britiſh* Dominions, would fill at leaſt Ten Volumes in Folio; and as few People would buy, and fewer read, ſo large a Work, commercial Knowledge could not be much promoted by it.

Thoſe Perſons who are not ſatisfied with knowing all that is nationally intereſting in a Branch of Trade, but like alſo to be informed of minute Facts, or Circumſtances, and to be acquainted with the various Controverſies which there have been concerning ſuch Branch of Trade, may find many of thoſe leſſer Matters carefully inſerted in that Hiſtory of our Woollen Manufactury, for theſe are what ſwell it to ſo great a Bulk; but the Number of ſuch Readers is very ſmall in Compariſon to the Number of thoſe Perſons who deſire to be informed of the *Nature* and *State* of Commerce, in as few Words, and at as little Expence as may be; and the Things which ſhould be inſerted in a commercial Hiſtory will make it extenſive enough.

So that Facts, Circumſtances, and Controverſies, which either never were nationally intereſting in themſelves, or have been rendered uſeleſs in that reſpect by Length of Time, ſhould not be inſerted in a general Work that is intended to promote commercial Knowledge: for there ought to be a Keeping of Proportion in Books as well as in Pictures; and the ſeveral Parts of a Subject ſhould be ſo treated of, that the Mind may diſcover which are the principal Objects therein, as the Eye is enabled to diſtinguiſh the principal Figures in an hiſtorical Picture.

In the Battle-Pieces of *John* Duke of *Marlborough*, that illuſtrious Hero is repreſented in the Fore-ground of the Picture, and the contending Armies in the Back-ground; which, according to the Rules of Perſpective, makes him appear as large as ſome Thouſands of the Men in his victorious Army; and by theſe Means, both the Eye and the Mind are led to view and contemplate that Object in the Picture which was the greateſt in Nature; for as to the Battallions and Squadrons of Soldiers which are repreſented beyond their General, thoſe, being properly diminiſhed in Perſpective, are conſidered only as the Inſtruments which executed what his Greatneſs planned.

Now though it may not be poſſible, in writing upon Commerce, or any other Subject, to ſhew the various Degrees of Importance which different Branches, or the Parts of them, are naturally of; yet, a Keeping certainly ought to be ſo far preſerved, as to prevent Trifles from being miſtaken for Matters of Importance; but ſuch Miſtakes are not likely to be prevented, when the *Minutiæ* of a Subject have Ten Times more Pages allotted to them, than are beſtowed upon the principal Objects; becauſe that is like repreſenting *Giants* as *Pigmies*, and *Pigmies* as *Giants*; which inverted Repreſentation muſt neceſſarily *confound Ideas of Proportion*, and *the Knowledge of Things* thereon depending.

For theſe Reaſons, I ſhould like One-Fourth Part of that Hiſtory of our Woollen Manufactury much better than I like the whole, if ſuch One-Fourth Part was ſeparated from the other Three, and properly digeſted; becauſe I ſhould then be exempted from the Trouble of reading more than is generally intereſting; for I think it is a valuable Work, though not properly compiled for the Purpoſe before mentioned; and if a Man who writes upon Trade *as a national Concern*, doth not ſay more of it than the Generality of Readers are intereſted in knowing, I am perſuaded that all he can offer concerning our *Woollen Manufactury*, may be comprized in One-Fourth Part of the Compaſs which that Hiſtory is extended to.

An hiſtorical Account of the different Branches of Manufactury and Trade belonging to *Great Britain*, ſhould conſiſt of only thoſe Facts, Specifications of Numbers, Quantities and Values; Calculations, national Reaſoning and Obſervations, which will contribute to promote the Knowledge of Trade *as a national Concern*; and I think it expedient to mention what Sorts of Facts, Specifications, *&c.* will, in my humble Opinion, beſt promote ſuch Knowledge; becauſe the Plan of a Work wherein this Nation is ſo deeply intereſted, ought to be very well conſidered before it is put in Execution.

The principal Matters propoſed to be inſerted in an hiſtorical Account of a Branch of Manufactury.

1ſt, The Time when, and the Means whereby ſuch Manufactury was firſt eſtabliſhed in *England*.

2d, The Time when it was extenſive enough to ſupply home Conſumption.

3d, The Time when it began to be farther extended by Exportation.

4th, The Names of the Counties, Towns, *&c.* wherein ſuch Manufactury was firſt ſet up.

5th, The Names of the Counties, Towns, *&c.* wherein it was carried on, at different Periods of Time.

6th, The Numbers of People who were employed therein, at thoſe different Periods.

7th, The Names of the Countries, Provinces, or Counties, wherein the Materials for ſuch Manufactury are produced.

8th, The Prices of ſuch Materials from Year to Year, diſtinguiſhing the principal Species thereof.

9th, The common Rates of Wages paid, from Time to Time, to Men, Women, and Children employed in ſuch Manufactury.

10th, Calculations ſhewing what Proportion the Value of their Labour bears to the Value of the Materials wrought by them.

11th, Calculations ſhewing what Proportion, the Numbers of Men, Women, and Children employed, bear to each other.

12th, Calculations ſhewing how long a Time the proper Numbers of Men, Women, and Children are employed in making a Piece, or other rateable Quantity of the Manufacture, and ſpecifying the Length and Breadth, or the Weight, of ſuch Piece or rateable Quantity.

13th, Accounts of the Quantities which have annually and from Time to Time been exported of ſuch Manufacture; expreſſing the Value thereof at the Time, and ſhewing the medium annual Export, by Periods of Five or Ten Years.

14*th*, A brief Recital of the Cauſes of every conſiderable Increaſe, Decreaſe, and Diſorder in ſuch Manufactury, or among the Manufacturers, from Time to Time.

15*th*, National Reaſoning and Remarks which particularly relate to ſuch Branch of Manufactury; ſhewing wherein it promotes or claſhes with other Branches of Manufactury, Trade, the Landed Intereſt, Naval Power, &c. of this Kingdom.

16*th*, Phyſical and political Obſervations relating to the Effects which ſuch Branch of Manufactury hath upon the Health, Strength, Manners, &c. of the People employed therein.

Miſcellaneous Matters, not properly reducible under any of the preceding Heads.

Theſe Sixteen Heads ſeem to me to include all that is generally intereſting in regard to any Branch of Manufactury, as a national Concern; and when a Branch of Manufactury is treated of according to this Plan, the Matter of ſuch Treatiſe cannot take up much room; nor can a Man who is fit for the Undertaking, either inſert Things which are foreign to the Purpoſe, or repeat the ſame Thing, without diſcovering ſuch Inſertion or Repetition; becauſe all that he mentions muſt appear under its proper Head, and in ſuch particular Part thereof as either Chronology or the Thread of Argument point out.

It is likewiſe certain, that an hiſtorical Account of the ſeveral Branches of Manufactury and Trade belonging to *Great Britain*, may be firſt compiled in an imperfect Manner, and the Defects therein be afterwards ſupplied by other Perſons, who ſhall have proper Materials for that Purpoſe; becauſe, not only the Compiler, but every Reader who is at all acquainted with the Subject will eaſily find out ſuch Defects, when the Matter of that Hiſtory is diſtributed under ſeparate Heads, and arranged in proper Order; for a Defect therein will then be near as perceptible to the Mind, as the Want of a Brick or a Stone is to the Eye.

And if, after ſuch Hiſtory hath been compiled, there ſhall appear to be national Reaſons for conſidering all or any of our Branches of Manufactury or Trade, in ſome Point of View which was not before attended to, that may be done without affecting what was before written; for in ſuch Caſe, nothing more will be neceſſary than to make additional Heads or Chapters to the Hiſtory, or to thoſe Branches thereof which require them, and to collect under the ſame, whatever nationally intereſting Facts, Calculations, Reaſoning, Remarks, &c. ſhall have any Relation thereto.

Or if falſe Facts, erroneous Calculations, &c. ſhould be inſerted in the propoſed Work, which is very likely to happen in a Caſe where Truth and Accuracy muſt depend upon many People, any ſuch rotten Materials may eaſily be taken out, and replaced by others which are ſound; becauſe moſt of thoſe Facts, Calculations, *&c.* will be either true or falſe in themſelves, and not in conſequence of many other preceding ones being true or falſe; ſo that the Falſity of one or a few of them cannot have a worſe Effect there, than a few rotten Planks have in a Ship, which may at any Time be repaired by inſerting ſound Timber in the decayed Parts thereof.

I think it neceſſary to ſay thus much concerning the Practicability of compiling a commercial Hiſtory, and the Facility of making Additions or Alterations in it afterwards; becauſe thoſe Three Things ought to be very plainly made appear in regard to a Work that cannot be completed by one Man, though it may be made ſufficiently complete by the joint Labours of many; and as to the Utility of ſuch a Hiſtory, I have already inſerted ſo many Proofs of it, that there cannot be much if any Occaſion for increaſing their Number; eſpecially as thoſe Perſons who are acquainted with the Subject, may eaſily diſcover that a Hiſtory compiled upon the preceding Plan, will ſhew more in *one Day* than can now be come at in *a Year*.

And when the nationally intereſting Part of what hath been written concerning the *Commerce*, *Coin*, and *Colonies* of this Kingdom, is collected and diſpoſed in ſome ſuch Manner as I have deſcribed, any Perſon of common Underſtanding may very eaſily find what he wants to know of it; for an Index will inform him where each Branch of Manufactury or Commerce is treated of, and he may there ſee all that is nationally valuable in regard to any ſuch Branch; or if there be a Defect of Matter, he may be aſſured that the Things which are wanting cannot be met with in any other printed Work.

So that there would not then be any Occaſion to employ Year after Year in collecting commercial Books and Pamphlets at a great Expence, nor to glean from Fifty of them what might be contained in One; neither would the Mind be embarraſſed with foreign or with trifling Matter, nor be tired out with Repetitions; for the whole might then be purchaſed at once; each Part be read when Intereſt or Inclination lead to it; the beſt Information concerning each Matter or Thing be immediately obtained; and the Wiſdom or Judgment of many able Men be ſo preſerved upon Record, that neither would appear unſeaſonably, and yet always be found when wanted.

Upon theſe two Circumſtances, the Progreſs of Knowledge chiefly depends; for Men who read to improve themſelves, do not often take up Books at Random, but generally in Conformity to ſome previous Determination which ſuits with the preſent Diſpoſition of the Mind; and if the Book referred to, contains the neceſſary Means for acquiring ſuch Sort of Knowledge as the Mind is then inclined to, it will be ſure to make a great Progreſs therein; but if there is a Want of Means to carry the Mind forward in that choſen Path, or many Obſtructions met with therein, *Attention will ſoon tire* and *Judgment ſleep*.

For though moſt Men bear Diſappointments in Reading much better than in Feeding, yet, the Mind loſes as much Improvement by the one, as the Body loſes of Nouriſhment by the other; and a Man may as reaſonably expect to preſerve Health by eating when he is thirſty and drinking when he is hungry, as hope to much improve his Mind by jumbled and croſs-purpoſed Reading: of which Matter there needs not a ſtronger Proof, than the low Ebb of commercial Knowledge, and the ſmall Number of Inquirers after it, in this Kingdom; for the Subject hath been ſo treated of, as to thwart and diſappoint the Minds of moſt Men who have applied to it, and therefore they have given over the Purſuit.

I am perſuaded it will be needleſs to dwell any longer upon theſe Matters; becauſe any Perſon may eaſily perceive how it hath come to paſs, that only a few People have hitherto well underſtood the Nature of Trade *as a national Concern*, or been properly acquainted with the Manufacturies and Trade of this Kingdom; and ſince I have ſpecified what Sorts of Facts, Calculations, Reaſoning, Obſervations, *&c.* will, in my humble Opinion, beſt eſtabliſh and promote commercial Knowledge; as well as ſhewn the Practicability and Facility of compiling a commercial Hiſtory; I ſhall now examine ſome Objections which may be made againſt ſuch a Compilation.

For ſeveral reſpectable Perſons probably will ſay, that it is not proper to publiſh ſome of thoſe Sorts of Facts which are mentioned in the preceding Sketch of a Plan; becauſe the diſcloſing of ſo many Secrets concerning our Manufacturies and Trade, may be productive of ill Conſequences to this Nation; and therefore it will be expedient to conſider what ill Conſequences can attend the Publication of ſuch of the ſaid Facts as are at preſent either wholly or in a great Meaſure kept ſecret; for if the Preſervation of any Part of our Manufacturies or Trade really depends upon ſuch Secrecy, it undoubtedly ought to be ſtill preſerved.

As to the Preſervation of the ſeveral Branches of Manufactury belonging to *Great Britain*; that doth fundamentally and chiefly depend upon one or other of the Four after-named Cauſes:

1*ſt*, Poſſeſſion of the Materials, or of more or better Materials, than are produced in other Countries.

2*d*, Natural Advantages in regard to Labour and Navigation; ſuch as Exemption from the Extremes of Heat and Cold, Plenty of cheap and good Firing, a Number of navigable Rivers, and eaſy Acceſs from all Parts to the Sea.

3*d*, Superior Skill in the Art of manufacturing ſuch Materials.

4*th*, Protection from foreign Manufactures; either by expreſs Prohibitions to import them into this Kingdom, or by laying ſuch Duties thereon at Importation, as make thoſe foreign Manufactures dearer here than the like Sorts of *Britiſh* Manufactures are; or by granting Bounties on the latter, when exported to other Countries.

To the Firſt, Second, and Fourth of theſe Cauſes, we owe the Preſervation of our *Woollen Manufacturies*; for *England* produceth the moſt uſeful Sorts of *Wool* in the greateſt Abundance; it likewiſe is ſtored with greater Plenty of cheap and good *Firing*, and is more exempted from Extremes of *Heat* and *Cold*, than any foreign Country in *Europe*; ſo that this Nation hath a very great Superiority of Advantages over all other Nations, in regard to the *Materials* and the *Manufactury*; and theſe being ſecured by wiſe Laws, which prohibit the Exportation of *Wool* and of *Fullers Earth*, as alſo, the Importation of *foreign Woollen Manufactures*; nothing but the Repeal or Violation of thoſe wiſe Laws, or taking other bad Meaſures, can deprive the *Britiſh* Nation of their *Woollen Manufacturies*.

The Preſervation of the *Britiſh* and *Iriſh Linen Manufacturies*, is owing to the Second and Fourth Cauſes; for *temperate Air* and *Plenty of Firing* are great Advantages in themſelves; and yet theſe would ſignify but little, in regard to our *Linen Manufacturies*, if conſiderable Duties were not laid on *foreign Linens* imported, and Bounties allowed on *Britiſh Linens* when exported; becauſe the low Prices of Labour in ſeveral other Countries where *Linens* are made, do enable the People thereof to ſell theirs cheaper than ours could be afforded without Bounties, although the Air is more temperate, and the Plenty of Firing greater in theſe Kingdoms than in thoſe Countries; eſpecially as ſeveral Nations have Advantages over us in regard to Materials, and in the Art of manufacturing ſome Sorts of *Linen*.

The Preſervation of our *Silk Manufacturies* is chiefly owing to the ſame Cauſes as ſecure our *Linen Manufacturies*; and partly to ſome wiſe Regulations in regard to different Sorts of *raw Silk*, foreign *thrown Silk*, and foreign *wrought Silks*.

The Preſervation of our *Metallic Manufacturies*, is, in ſome Inſtances owing to one of thoſe Four Cauſes, and in ſome Inſtances to the others; but in general, our *Lead*, *Tin*, and *Copper* Mines, together with *temperate Air*, greater Plenty of *Coals*, *ſubſtantial Fare*, and *a general Diſpoſition to excel in Workmanſhip*, are the Cauſes of theſe Manufacturies increaſing ſo rapidly as they have done ſince the Beginning of the Reign of King *William* and Queen *Mary*; before which Time, great Quantities of *foreign Metallic Manufactures* were imported into *England*:——And, to ſum up the whole of theſe Matters in a few Words, the Preſervation of the BRITISH MANUFACTURIES is fundamentally and almoſt wholly owing to *a great Superiority of natural Advantages*, to *that Spirit which the ſecure Enjoyment of* LIBERTY AND PROPERTY *infuſes into Men*, and to *wiſe commercial Laws*.

This being the Caſe, I do not ſee how the Publication of thoſe ſeveral Sorts of Facts, &c. which are mentioned in the propoſed Sketch for a commercial Hiſtory, can be prejudicial to the Manufacturies of this Kingdom; for ſuch Publication neither will alter the Laws of Nature, nor repeal the Laws of this Country, nor reveal any Secrets in our Manufacturies; ſince nothing can properly be deemed a Secret therein, but the Art of making ſome Manufacture or other in a better or leſs expenſive Manner than the like Kind of Manufacture is made in other Countries; and not a Word of this Sort is either propoſed or wanted to be publiſhed.

As to our *foreign Trade*, it is to be conſidered in the firſt Place, that every Branch thereof doth fundamentally and chiefly depend upon our *Manufacturies*; for the general Reaſon why the People of other Nations buy ſuch vaſt Quantities of our *Woollen Manufactures*, is, their being the beſt, or the cheapeſt to thoſe Nations; and ſince I cannot comprehend how the Goodneſs or the Prices of our *Woollen*, *Linen*, *Silk*, *Metallic*, &c. *Manufactures* either will or can be affected by the Publication of thoſe Sorts of Facts, I am quite at a Loſs to find out any one ill Conſequence that can reſult therefrom, to the *foreign Trade* of this Kingdom.

I know it may be ſaid, that ſuch Publication would induce other Nations to attend more to the Improvement of their own Trade, which muſt in the End be prejudicial to this Kingdom; and that Objection might have had much Weight with ſome Perſons a Century ago, when the *Engliſh* and *Dutch* had moſt of the Trade in *Europe*; but ſince that Time, all the Princes and States in this Quarter of the World have turned their Attention to the Improvement of Manufacturies and Trade in their reſpective Countries; ſo that the Reaſon of ſuch Objection hath long ſince diſappeared, at leaſt with regard to the Trade of *Great Britain*.

For thoſe Improvements in the Manufacturies and Trade of various *European* Nations, have chiefly been made at the Expence of the Republics of *Holland* and of *Venice*, whoſe former great Trade was not founded upon domeſtic Means of theirs, but upon the Negligence of other Nations, and therefore the one ſunk as the other decreaſed; but neither the *French*, nor no other *European* Nations have, by any commercial Improvements of theirs, been able to ſink the general Trade of *Great Britain*, although in particular Inſtances they have, by wrong Proceedings here, been enabled to gain upon us; for notwithſtanding all that other Nations have done, our annual Exports of *Woollen Manufactures* have of late Years been near Three Times as great, as the like Sort of Exports were a Hundred Years ago.

This Fact is well known to moſt of thoſe Perſons who have employed much Time in commercial Inquiries; and it may very well ſerve to ſhew, that *Great Britain* hath not any thing to apprehend from a Publication of the ſeveral Sorts of Facts before mentioned, ſince in it there is ſummed up the Experience of a Hundred Years; during which long Interval, the Trade of *England* muſt have decreaſed, as the Trade of *Holland* and of *Venice* have done, if, like the others, it had been founded upon *foreign Means*, and held by *the Negligence of various Powers*; but the Trade of *England* is founded upon the *Laws of Nature*, and therefore cannot be taken away by the *Laws of other Nations*.

Leſſer Ebbings and Flowings muſt however be expected in the Trade of this Nation, according as other Nations enjoy Peace or ſuffer by War; but as to taking away Trade from *England*, in the Manner that Trade hath been taken away from *Holland* and from *Venice*, that cannot be effected by other Nations, unleſs ruinous Meaſures or Conduct be purſued here; for let them make what commercial Laws they will, their Countries will not have more or leſs *Heat*, *Cold*, *Rain*, *Snow*, *Metals*, *Minerals*, *Rivers*, *Sea-Coaſt*, or *Sea-Fiſh*, than Nature hath allotted; nor will they be able to breed and feed ſuch numerous Herds and Flocks of *Cattle* and *Sheep* as are in *England*; becauſe they have not *the natural Means of doing it*.

Some Perſons probably will ſay, that though the People of other Countries cannot alter the Courſe of Nature, they can nevertheleſs make much greater Improvements in their Lands than have hitherto been made, and therefore we ought not to rely upon paſt Experience in this reſpect; but ſuch Perſons ſhould conſider that the more Improvements other Nations make, the greater will their Wants be; for there are no People who, in Proportion to their Numbers, want ſo few foreign Commodities and Manufactures as the ſavage *Indians* and *Africans*, nor no People who conſume ſo much foreign Produce as the *Engliſh* Nation.

During the Reigns of King *James* the Firſt, and King *Charles* the Firſt, the annual Conſumption of foreign Commodities and Manufactures in *England*, amounted to about TWO Millions of Pounds *Sterling* in Value; but the Improvements ſince made here, have increaſed ſuch Conſumption to FIVE or SIX Millions of Pounds: and the Improvements made by other Nations, have in like Manner increaſed their Want of *Engliſh Woollen Manufactures*; for they have annually conſumed near Three Times as many of late Years, as were annually exported a Century ago; although the *French* were not then able to ſupply themſelves with *Woollen Manufactures*, and have of late exported great Quantities.

Certainly theſe Matters do moſt clearly ſhew, that the *Britiſh* Nation hath not any thing to fear, but much to hope for, from commercial Improvements being made in other Countries; and therefore, I am humbly of Opinion, that, on this account only, the aforeſaid Facts ought rather to be publiſhed than concealed: and as to any particular Objections which may be made againſt publiſhing Accounts of the Commodities and Manufactures annually exported from this Kingdom, and of Commodities and Manufactures annually imported into it, I humbly apprehend that the main Force of ſuch Objections is already taken away.

It is likewiſe to be conſidered, that Accounts of Exports and of Imports are kept in other Countries, as well as in this; ſo that whenever the Miniſters of State, in *Spain*, *Portugal*, *France*, *Holland*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Ruſſia*, &c. want to know how their Trade with *Great Britain* ſtands, their own Accounts will ſhew them; or if the Miniſters of one Nation want to know what Trade ſome other Nation carries on with a Third Nation, that Knowledge undoubtedly may be gained by the Ambaſſador or the Conſul of ſuch firſt Nation reſiding in one or other of thoſe Two Nations, either from public Accounts, or by other good Information.

So that if the Accounts of our Exports and Imports were publiſhed, other Nations would not diſcover more thereby, than either their own Accounts do inform them of, or their Ambaſſadors or Conſuls reſiding in other Countries can find out, whenever there is Occaſion for knowing it; and ſince various Parts of the Accounts of our Exports and Imports have not only been publiſhed upon different Occaſions, but thoſe for the Port of *London*, which make about Two Thirds of the Whole, may be come at by the weekly printed Papers of Exports, and Imports, it is in vain to think of keeping ſuch Things ſecret from other Nations.

But I fear that Accidents will one Time or other deprive this Nation of all or a great Part of their Accounts of *Exports*, *Imports*, *Shipping*, *Seamen*, &c. if the various Matters therein contained be not annually ſtated, and general Abſtracts thereof depoſited in Two or Three different Places of Record; and conſidering that ſuch Abſtracts would be of very great preſent Uſe to the Miniſtry, by ſhewing to them the commercial State of *Great Britain*, *Ireland*, and the *Britiſh Colonies*, in a clear and conciſe Manner, I cannot help thinking that ſuch a Syſtem of political Anatomy ſhould annually be compiled.

For many Irregularities in Trade, which now eſcape Notice, would then be diſcovered; and there would not be Occaſion to call for any of thoſe Accounts long before they will be wanted; nor to poſtpone preſſing Buſineſs depending thereon, till neceſſary Information ſhall be ſent for and received from *America*, &c. neither would there be ſuch Confuſion, nor ſo many Chaſms, in our commercial Records, as have at different Times been manifeſted, in Reports from the Board of Trade, from Dr. *Davenant*, &c. for if any Perſon employed in thoſe Matters, ſhall omit to perform the Duties of his Office, ſuch Omiſſion would ſoon be diſcovered.

By thoſe Means the Bench might be properly raiſed above the Bar, in commercial Proceedings; for nothing more would be wanted from Perſons in Trade, than a Declaration of ſuch particular Facts as ſhall relate to the Affair under Conſideration, ſo that their Buſineſs would be to give *Evidence* and not *Judgment*; the latter whereof is ever moſt graceful when ſhe appears in the Seat of Determination; for Authority ſuffers much by the Chairman of an honourable Committee being obliged to aſk the Captain of a trading Ship, whether the Ballance of our Trade with a *Britiſh* Colony is in favour of or againſt this Kingdom.

All Accounts of the public Revenues and Expences are made up every Year, ſo as to ſhew the State of each in a ſmall Compaſs; and it is eaſy to perceive, that the Means of ſupporting both, have a natural Claim to at leaſt the ſame Degree of Attention that is paid to the others; for the principal Landholders of *England* do not content themſelves with examining their Stewards Accounts of *Money* received and paid, but occaſionally inquire how their *Lands* are uſed, what *Stock* there is upon them, and how their *Tenants* live; well knowing, that thoſe are the Sources from whence their Revenues flow.

Every conſiderable Ebbing in any Branch of our Manufactury or Trade would then be directly notified to the Miniſtry, and proper Inquiry might be made into the Cauſes thereof, before it brought Thouſands of Families to Diſtreſs by a numerous Poor, or broke out into Clamour and Tumult; ſo that the Parties aggrieved would find the Cauſe removed when they came to make known its ill Effects, or that proper Meaſures were taking for their Relief; either of which Things muſt neceſſarily be productive of the happieſt Conſequences; not only by promoting the Welfare of this Nation, but by making leſs thorny and burthenſome the Adminiſtration of Government.——

I have now moſt humbly repreſented, all that appears to me to be neceſſary in regard to the preſent State of commercial Knowledge in this Kingdom, and to the Expediency as well as the Means of promoting the ſame; and if it ſhall be thought that the Matters herein propoſed are Objects of public Protection and Support, I ſhall eſteem it a very great Honour to be employed in forming for public Service *the Elements of Commerce*, and *an hiſtorical Account of the Britiſh Manufacturies and Trade*, wherein I have already been at a very conſiderable Expence.

All which is moſt humbly ſubmitted by

J. Maſſie.

graceful when she appears in the Seat of Determination; for [illegible] makers much by the Chairman of an honourable [illegible] obliged to ask the Captain of a trading Ship, whether the [illegible] of [illegible] with a *Braze* Colony is in favour of, or against [illegible] it.

All Accounts of the public Revenue and Expences are made up every Year, so as to shew the State of each in a small Compass; and it is easy to perceive, that the Means of [illegible] both, have a rational Claim to at least the same Degree of Attention that is paid to the [illegible]; for the principal Tradesmen of [illegible] do not content themselves with examining their Stewards Accounts of Money received and paid, but carefully inquire how their Lands are used, what Rent there is upon them, and how their Tenants live; well knowing, that these are the Sources from whence their Revenues flow.

Every considerable Failing in any Branch of our Manufactures or Trade would then be quickly known to the [illegible], and perhaps the Remedy might be made into the Causes thereof, before it brought Thousands of Families to Distress by a numerous Poor, or broke out into Clamour and Tumult; so that the Parties aggrieved would not [illegible] when they came to make known their Hardships, and [illegible] were taking for their Relief; either of which [illegible] Compensation; the only [illegible]

I have now [illegible] humbly represented, all that appears to me to be necessary in regard to the present State of commercial Knowledge in this Kingdom, and to the Expediency as well as the Means of promoting the same; and if it shall be thought that the Matters herein proposed are Objects of public Attention and Support, I shall esteem it a very great Honour to be employed in forming the [illegible] *General Account of the* [illegible] and *Trade*, wherein I have already been at a very considerable Expence.

All which is most humbly submitted by

J. M. F.